



JCHS and LCF joint Media Release. May 22, 2015

USA apologises to Jamaica

An official with the US Embassy in Kingston, Jamaica has apologized to the Government of Jamaica for what he described as “a diplomatic faux-pas and miscommunication’ regarding the on-going visit to the island of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Special Envoy Randy Berry and USAID Senior LGBT Coordinator Todd Larson. The Special Envoy was sent by the US State Department to ‘meet with government representatives, in addition to representatives from religious, business, academic, and civil society organizations’ according to the news release posted on the US State Department website.[1]

Joshua Polacheck, Counselor for Public Affairs at the US Embassy in Kingston acknowledged and apologized for the lack of clear communication between respective governments.

He also admitted that Ministers or officials from the Information and Gender Affairs Office, the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade were not made aware of the Envoy’s visit. A possible meeting was expected with the Minister of Justice, Senator Mark Golding, who attended the reception for the emissaries at the US Ambassador’s residence on Thursday, May 21, 2015.

Mr Polacheck was anxious to assure the Jamaican people that Messrs. Berry and Larson only came to dialogue and listen to Jamaican society and that they should be meeting with a broad range of stakeholders, including local family advocacy groups.

Checks with two of the island’s pro-family advocacy groups, the Jamaica Coalition for a Healthy Society (JCHS) and the Lawyers Christian Fellowship, Jamaica indicated that they were not invited to meet with Mr Berry.

The US Embassy official emphasized that the USA would not impose any sanctions, economic or otherwise on Jamaica for its positions on LGBT issues or the maintenance of the buggery law. Mr Polacheck was speaking on a special edition of TBC Radio’s morning programme ‘Morning Joy’, which

was hosted by attorney-at-law and veteran journalist, Helene Coley-Nicholson, and Advocacy Officer of the JCHS, Philippa Davies.

Also speaking on the programme was Dr Wayne West, Chairman of the Jamaica Coalition for a Healthy Society who considered the US' pursuit of LGBT 'rights' reflective of moral nihilism that is, removing any recognition of right or wrong, as it relate to issues of intimacy. This translates into sexual anarchy, where all sexual expression is permissible. It is an illogical stance as demonstrated by the high rates of HIV/AIDS among the men who have sex with men (MSM) communities.

Daniel Thomas, President of the Love March Movement (LMM), a youth Christian organisation advocating sexual purity and the family, also commented on the visit as demonstrating 'cultural imperialism and sneaky attempts to impose on Jamaica the LGBT philosophy of marriage and family.'

He indicated that the LMM was mounting a peaceful protest outside of the Jamaica Pegasus hotel where meetings between the Envoy and locals were reportedly taking place. He called on Americans to respect Jamaica's sovereign right to preserve the integrity of our democratic system and to make our own decisions, especially on topics that are linked to deeply held cultural values.

-End-

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[1] <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/05/242615.htm>